

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 07546 141530Z
ACTION SS-25

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TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN NIACT IMMEDIATE
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EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS JO IS XF
SUBJ: MILITARY MOVEMENTS ON JORDAN-ISRAEL BORDER

REF: A. AMMAN 5258, B. USDAO TEL AVIV IR 6 849 0516 78,
DTG 140920Z JUN 78, C. USDAO TEL AVIV IR 6 849 0515 78,
DTG 131628Z JUN 78

1. FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT IS PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO REFTEL A.

A. CONSIDERABLE MILITARY MOVEMENTS OBSERVED ON JORDAN -
ISRAEL BORDER WERE PARTLY DETAILED IN REFTEL B AND ARE
ASSESSED TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE IDF WITHDRAWAL FROM
SOUTHERN LEBANON, THE MOVE OF THE 35TH PARA BDE FROM THE
JORDAN TO THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, AND THE ANTICIPATED MOVE
OF THE GOLANI BDE TO THE JORDAN VALLEY FOR TRAINING.

B. IN THE VICINITY OF BEIT SHEAN, WE HOLD TWO
ARTILLERY BATTERIES AND A TANK COMPANY. THIS LATTER
THE PREVIOUSLY VACANT OBSERVATION POSTS IN THE
VALLEY. IT IS HIGHLY POSSIBLE THAT ADDITIONAL ARMOR
UNITS WERE MOVED INTO THE JORDAN VALLEY IN RESPONSE
TO THE ATTACK ON KIBBUTZ MEHOLA AND IN VIEW OF THE
POSSIBILITY OF YET ANOTHER RAID ACROSS THE BORDER.

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C. THE ISRAELIS, AS INDICATED IN REFTEL C, ARE
VERY MUCH AWARE THAT THE BEST EFFORTS OF BOTH SIDES
AT TIMES MAY NOT BE ADEQUATE TO PREVENT A TERRORIST
ATTACK. THIS AWARENESS COUPLED WITH THE FACT OF
THE ADVANCE WARNING FROM JORDAN AND THE CONVICTION
THAT JORDAN IS REALLY TRYING TO PREVENT TERRORISTS

ATTACKS PERSUADES DAO TEL AVIV THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ISRAELI RETALIATORY STRIKE, PARTICULARLY ONE INVOLVING ARMOR, AGAINST JORDAN IS MOST UNLIKELY TO OCCUR. HOWEVER, A HIGHER ALERT POSTURE SHOULD BE EXPECTED TO MAINTAIN ALONG THE BORDER UNTIL "THE OTHER SHOE DROPS" OR FOR A PERIOD OF SOME WEEKS.

2. THIS DIALOGUE SURFACES INTERESTING CONTRADICTIONS IN "FACTS" SURROUNDING THE MEHOLA INCIDENT. ISRAELIS THOUGHT FOUR TERRORISTS WERE INVOLVED, NOT FIVE AS REPORTED IN REFTEL A. WHERE WAS THE OTHER TERRORIST AT THE TIME OF THE ATTACK? ISRAELIS THOUGHT AT LEAST ONE TERRORIST HAD RETURNED TO DAMASCUS TO DEBRIEF (REFTEL C) AND APPARENTLY ARE UNAWARE THAT JORDAN CAPTURED THOSE INVOLVED. THIS SUPPOSEDLY "RELIABLE" INFORMATION WAS THE BASIS FOR THE ISRAELI DETERMINATION THAT "FATAH" WAS RESPONSIBLE. QUESTION: WHAT ACTION WILL THE JORDANIANS TAKE AGAINST THE TERRORISTS? FINALLY, ARE THERE IDENTIFIABLE PALESTINIAN TARGETS IN JORDAN THAT COULD TEMPT A "SURGICAL" ISRAELI RETALIATORY ATTACK?

3. BASED ON YOUR CONCERNS WE ARE DISPATCHING A ROAD RECONNAISSANCE OF THE JORDAN VALLEY ON 15 JUNE AND WILL REPORT VIA IR CHANNEL ON RESULTS AND OBSERVATIONS.

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4. FOR AMMAN: DO WE HAVE YOUR PERMISSION TO INFORM GOI THAT FEDAYEEN WHO ATTACKED ISRAELI SETTLEMENT HERE PICKED UP BY JORDANIAN PATROL WHILE TRYING TO CROSS BACK INTO SYRIA? WE SEE CONSIDERABLE MERIT IN INFORMING ISRAELIS OF THIS FACT.

5. THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN CLEARED BY THE AMBASSADOR. LEWIS

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NNN

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